



INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 The previous Members' Allowance Scheme expired on 31 March 2015 and so in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) needed to review the current scheme and make formal recommendations on a revised scheme with effect from 1 April 2015 for a period of up to four years. At its meeting on 11 March 2015, Council agreed (report REP933 refers) that a further review would need to be undertaken during 2017, in order to make sure that the newly adopted Members' Allowance Scheme was still appropriate. The resolution stated that:

2.41 Having considered the level of BA and SRAs that would apply from 1st April 2015 to 31 March 2016, the IRP considered what level of allowances should be applied for future years (up to a maximum of four years ie up to 2018/19).

2.42 The IRP was conscious that the next few years would possibly bring forth the need to make many changes that were as yet unknown and so its recommendations included a request to return in two years' time to allow a further review of allowances taking into account the climate prevailing at the time.

2.43 It was agreed that all elements of any revised Members Allowance Scheme should be reviewed in 2 years time so that any revised provisions can be applied in time for 2017/18.

1.2 Therefore, an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) was convened during 2017. The IRP members were Karen Forster (Chairman), Sandra Cox and Ivor Holden. They met on the following occasions 5 July, 9 August, 23 August, 5 September, 25 September and 26 October.

1.3 The IRP considered and have made recommendations in relation to the following matters:

- a) The level of the Basic Allowance (BA) for 2017/18 to 2018/19.
- b) The extent and level of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for 2017/18 to 2018/19.
- c) The level of travel and subsistence allowances for 2017/18 to 2018/19.

- d) The level of Dependent Carers Allowance (DCA) for 2017/18 to 2018/19.
 - e) Whether to pay 'Co-Optees Allowances' (CA) for 2017/18 and beyond and if so what that allowance should be.
 - f) Whether the revised level of allowances should be index-linked and back dated.
- 1.4 Previously Waveney District Councillors had access to the Local Government Pension Scheme but entitlement to this was revoked. The national position now is that Elected Members are not able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme by virtue of their role as a Councillor.
- 1.5 This report outlines the issues that were considered by the IRP, explains the reasoning behind proposed changes and sets out formal recommendations for a revised Waveney District Council (WDC) Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 1.6 The IRP considered a range of documentation as part of their review of Members' Allowances including the following:
- Independent Remuneration Panel Report from March 2015
 - Current Waveney District Council (WDC) Members' Allowance Scheme
 - WDC Member Role Descriptions, which were last revised in January 2014, including the newly created Deputy Cabinet Member positions
 - Comparative Members' Allowances information with other local authorities across Suffolk and other similar sized authorities
 - National comparative data on Members' Allowances
 - Schedule of Cabinet Member portfolio responsibilities
 - Costings for providing care for dependents for a qualified nurse, basic carer and for childcare.
 - Results from the Member Questionnaire on Members' Allowances and time spent on WDC activities.
- 1.7 In addition, the IRP conducted a series of interviews to allow them to question at first hand Waveney Councillors on a cross-party basis, regarding their roles and responsibilities, including some holders of SRAs. The Members interviewed were:
- Councillor Mark Bee – Leader of the Council / Cabinet Chair / Conservative Member.
 - Councillor Stephen Ardley – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities & Merger / Conservative Member.
 - Councillor Sonia Barker – Labour Group Leader (main Opposition Group Leader).
 - Councillor Tess Gandy – Backbench Member / Labour Party.

2. REVIEW OF THE WAVENEY MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Basic Allowance

- 2.1 The IRP had previously recommended at their last review in 2015, that the Basic Allowance (BA) be increased to £4,648.90 per annum, which comprised of a number of elements, including £1,000 per year for IT equipment. However, the Councillors at the Full Council meeting on 11 March 2015 had resolved that the BA would remain

unchanged, and instead all Councillors would receive a one-off payment of £1,000 for IT equipment, paid in June 2015.

- 2.2 It was noted that the level of BA payable from 1 April 2017 was currently £3,722.24 per annum, which included the 1% pay increases, linked to officers' pay, which had been received in 1 April 2016 and 1 April 2017.
- 2.3 An analysis was undertaken of an extract of national comparative data of Members' Allowances information for local authorities of a similar size / population / number of Councillors to WDC. This comparative data was from 2017. It was noted that WDC was towards the bottom of the table in respect of the amount of their BA.
- 2.4 Particular consideration was given to the feedback received from WDC Councillors as to how much time they spent on WDC ward related activities, and with meetings, in considering what the level of the BA should be.
- 2.5 The IRP were also mindful that WDC may cease to exist from May 2019 onwards, should the Secretary of State agree to the proposals which WDC and Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) have, to create a new Council for East Suffolk. Currently, SCDC Councillors received a Basic Allowance of £4,787.57 per annum.
- 2.6 The IRP noted that Councillors from both SCDC and WDC already worked closely together in many ways and would be undertaking preparatory work to create a 'Shadow Council' for the proposed new Council, from 2018 onwards. The disparity in the amount of the BA, between the two partner Councils, was marked, and was something which the IRP was mindful of, particularly in the light of the shared working between both, and the similarity of Councillor roles and responsibilities. The disparity also served to highlight the fact that WDC Councillors had, over a number of years, foregone any increases in their BA, and that the WDC BA was now very low in comparison to many other councils in the area, as well as SCDC.
- 2.7 The IRP wished to provide reassurance that the proposed increase in BA for WDC Members WDC would have no impact upon any future Members' Allowance Scheme which might be agreed for any newly created Council for East Suffolk. A further IRP review would need to be undertaken to create a Members' Allowance Scheme for the new Council and this would take place in due course.
- 2.8 The members of the IRP wished to express admiration for the Councillors of WDC and acknowledged that the BA for the work which they undertook did not reflect their commitment, skills or the number of hours they devoted to fulfilling their roles.
- 2.9 It was generally considered that the current BA and SRAs did not reflect the professional role of 'Councillor', as there had been a significant increase in responsibilities over time. There also needed to be a balance between the BA and the number of SRAs to maintain the 'special' element. It was recognised that there was a voluntary element in becoming a Councillor but equally if WDC wanted to attract a more diverse range of people to come forward and become Councillors then appropriate remuneration needed to be in place, as otherwise individuals on low incomes were unlikely to stand for election.
- 2.10 Therefore the Panel were recommending a Basic Allowance of £4,787.57 per annum.

Special Responsibility Allowances

- 2.11 The IRP felt that the allowances for the Leader and Deputy Leader needed to be increased to reflect the additional responsibility that was associated with the roles, particularly in relation to the creation of the new Council. Both of these posts would be instrumental in ensuring that Waveney District Council was adequately represented during discussions and associated Board Meetings.
- 2.12 The IRP was of the view that the current allowance for Delegated Cabinet Members and Other Cabinet Members was sufficient for the role and level of responsibility that they were undertaking and would therefore remain unchanged. It was noted that the position of Deputy Cabinet Members had been created, to assist those Cabinet Members with a larger portfolio and to make sure that their workload remained manageable.
- 2.13 The IRP also felt that the role of Deputy Cabinet Members needed to receive a payment, in recognition of the additional responsibility, training and experience that Members undertaking this role would need to gain. Their roles would be crucial to succession planning and building resilience within the Cabinet, ensuring that there were additional Members with the essential skills and experience for the future. The role of Deputy Cabinet Member was felt to be of a similar level as the Vice Chairman of a Committee.
- 2.14 With regard to the role of Committee Chairmen for the Planning, Licensing, Audit & governance and Overview & Scrutiny Committees it was felt that they should all receive the same level of SRA. This was due to the number of meetings which were being held and it was noted that the Chairmen all received officer support for the technical and legal aspects of reports. Previously, the Licensing Committee Chairman was paid a lower allowance level, due to the support they received from the Licensing Team, however it was felt that all Chairmen received support and guidance in this way from the relevant officers. The Licensing Committee Chairman was also involved in many of the Licensing Sub-Committee meetings which were arranged on an ad hoc basis, according to need and statutory deadlines. Therefore it was proposed that the Allowance for the Licensing Committee Chairman be increased to mirror that received by the other Committee Chairmen.
- 2.15 The IRP was of the view that the Vice Chairmen of the Committees should also receive recognition for their role, as they could be required to Chair a meeting in place of the substantive Chairman, at any time. However, it was felt that the Planning Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Committee Vice Chairmen should be granted a slightly higher rate of allowance, compared to the Vice Chairmen of the other Committees, given the nature of the Committee Business, workload and frequency of meetings. The Planning and Overview & Scrutiny Committees met on a monthly basis, with occasional additional Extraordinary meetings being required. As a result, it was recommended that the SRA be 0.5 x BA, which equated to £2,393.78.
- 2.16 The IRP decided that, although it could sometimes be a challenging role, for the Licensing Committee and Audit & Governance Committee Vice Chairmen the overall responsibility of those roles was slightly less, given the general scope of work, frequency of meetings, reduced time commitment and the large amount of professional assistance being given to those Committees. Therefore, it was proposed that the SRA be 0.2 x the BA, which equated to £957.51.

2.17 The IRP agreed that the Planning Committee Members (other than the Chairmen and Vice-Chairman) and Vice Chairman of the Council should not receive any allowance for undertaking those roles at this time.

2.18 Where one political group is in control, and where an authority has decided to pay SRAs, the authority must make provision for the payment of a SRA to at least one member of a minority group.

2.19 The IRP reviewed the existing formula for calculating the SRA for Opposition Group Leader(s) which was as follows:

$$\text{BA} \div \text{total number of Opposition Members on the Council} \times \text{No of Members in the party / group} = \text{Level of SRA allowance.}$$

The above was limited to groups of 2 members or more.

2.20 As with all of the SRA's, an individual was only entitled to receive one SRA at any one time.

2.21 The SRAs were therefore agreed as follows:

Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)	Old Value of Allowance Per Annum	New Value of Allowance Per Annum
Leader of the Council	£9,305.60	£14,362.00
Deputy Leader of the Council	£6,513.92	£9,575.14
Delegated Cabinet Members	£5,583.36	£5,583.36
Other Cabinet Members (none currently exist)	£4,950.59	£4,950.59
Deputy Cabinet Member	~	£2,393.78
Chairman of a Committee	£4,950.59 (excl Licensing Chairman)	£4,950.59 (incl Licensing Chairman)
Chairman of the Licensing Committee	£1,861.12	~
Vice Chairmen of the Planning Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Committee	~	£2,393.78
Vice Chairmen of the Licensing Committee and Audit & Governance Committee	~	£957.51
Chairman of the Council	£4,950.59	£7,181.35
Leader of the Opposition Parties / Groups (Limited to Groups with 2 Members or more). (Basic Allowance divided by total number of Opposition Members on the Council x No of Members in the party / group).	As per the formula	As per the formula

Travel Allowances

- 2.22 No change.

Subsistence Allowances

- 2.23 No change.

Dependent Carers Allowance

- 2.24 The Panel wished to differentiate between a carer's allowance for adult and child dependents.
- 2.25 For dependents requiring specialist care, a maximum of £20 per hour could be claimed, per carer/nurse, for actual costs incurred.
- 2.26 Up-to-date prices were sought for the provision of baby sitting and child minding. It was proposed that a maximum of £10 per hour could be claimed, unless provided free of charge under a government scheme, for actual costs incurred.
- 2.27 Payment of a Dependent Carers Allowance, for an adult or a child, would be subject to the production of a receipt and the care should not be provided by a family member. This would ensure that only the actual costs of obtaining care would be reimbursed and there would also be an auditable trail for any such payments made.

Co-optees Allowances

- 2.28 No change.

Withholding of Payments

- 2.29 No change.

Time Period for Application of revised Members' Allowances Scheme

- 2.30 Having considered the level of BA and SRAs that would apply it was agreed that they should be back dated to 1 April 2017.
- 2.31 The Panel agreed that the existing link between increases in officer pay and increases in Members' Allowances should be maintained so that any increases applied to officer pay post April 2017 should similarly be applied to Members' Allowances (including both the BA and SRAs). This was in recognition that the Waveney Members Allowance Scheme was significantly lower than other similar Councils in Suffolk and East Anglia, including Suffolk Coastal District Council. Many Councillors had also been undertaking additional work in relation to the creation of a new Council for East Suffolk and it would be appropriate for them to be paid an amount similar to that of Suffolk Coastal District Councillors.
- 2.32 The Waveney District Council Members' Allowance Scheme would be in operation until 30 April 2019, unless reviewed further, after which Waveney District Council may cease to exist if the Secretary for State for the DCLG agrees to the proposals which the Councils have put to him about the creation of a new Council for East Suffolk. Should the new Council be created it would be necessary to convene a further IRP review.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

1. That the Basic Allowance for 2017/18 and 2018/19 be increased to £4,787.57 per annum, back dated to 1 April 2017.
2. That the following Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) be applied and back dated to 1 April 2017:

Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)	Old Value of Allowance Per Annum	New Value of Allowance Per Annum
Leader of the Council	£9,305.60	£14,362.00
Deputy Leader of the Council	£6,513.92	£9,575.14
Delegated Cabinet Members	£5,583.36	£5,583.36
Other Cabinet Members (none currently exist)	£4,950.59	£4,950.59
Deputy Cabinet Member	~	£2,393.78
Chairman of a Committee	£4,950.59 (excl Licensing Chairman)	£4,950.59 (incl Licensing Chairman)
Chairman of the Licensing Committee	£1,861.12	~ (See above)
Vice Chairmen of the Planning Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Committee	~	£2,393.78
Vice Chairmen of the Licensing Committee and Audit & Governance Committee	~	£957.51
Chairman of the Council	£4,950.59	£7,181.35
Leader of the Opposition Parties / Groups (Limited to Groups with 2 Members or more). (Basic Allowance divided by total number of Opposition Members on the Council x No of Members in the party / group).	As per the formula	As per the formula

3 Dependent Carers Allowance for Councillors

- 3.1 The Allowance for specialist care of dependents (in circumstances previously approved by the Council's Monitoring Officer) is set at a maximum of £20.00 per hour, per carer/nurse, for actual costs incurred.
- 3.2 The Allowance for care of child dependents (in circumstances previously approved by the Council's Monitoring Officer) is set at:
 - Babysitting - up to a maximum of £10.
 - Child Minding - up to a maximum of £10, unless provided free of charge under a

government scheme, for actual costs incurred.

- 3.3 Payment of the Dependent Carers Allowance is subject to the production of a receipt and should not be provided by a family member.
- 3.4 The remainder of the Travel and Subsistence Claims would remain unchanged.

.....

Karen Forster
(Chair)

Sandra Cox

Ivor Holden

(The 3 individuals constituting the Independent Remuneration Panel).

24 January 2018